

## **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE**

June 17, 2002

The New Mexico Game and Fish Department has announced the confirmation of Chronic Wasting Disease in a mule deer harvested in November of 2001 during the fall firearms season. This is perplexing to CWD managers and researchers as this location is over 500 airline miles from the nearest endemic area in Colorado and there are no game farms anywhere near the location. The Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish declared an Animal Health Emergency and immediately closed the borders of New Mexico to the import of live cervids until further notice.

On Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department stopped a truck with 11 illegal deer just west of San Antonio. This was in direct violation of their current ban on the import of cervids. The driver of the truck was fined over \$11,100 and the deer were seized. All the deer were killed and cremated. The driver of the truck has been uncooperative and they are still attempting to determine where the deer came from and where they were going. The brain stem was collected for CWD testing. The estimated value of the deer was \$15,000. Additionally, they confiscated 5 deer that were illegally moved from one facility to another and have submitted brain stems for testing.

The second draft of the proposed National CWD Plan has been disseminated and reviewed by the states. This plan is much better than the first draft but still needs work to insure that the primacy of the states in managing free-ranging wildlife is emphasized and that the requested funding is funneled to the states and universities that can do the needed work and research. Final reviews are being conducted this week and the final plan will be presented to the National CWD Task Force on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.

House Bill 4795, Introduced by Congressman McInnis of Colorado, is titled "Chronic Wasting Disease Support for States Act of 2002" is scheduled for mark-up before the House Resources Committee on June 26<sup>th</sup>. A companion bill, S. 2560 has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Allred of Colorado but has not been scheduled for mark-up at this time.

The supplemental appropriations bill currently working its way through Congress contains \$21 million for CWD on the Senate side and \$15 million for CWD on the House side. Once the bills are passed, a conference committee will determine the final amount. The states have relayed information to the sponsors of each bill recommending the \$21 million amount be placed in both bills.

An elk producer in Colorado whose ranch was depopulated under the Federal Government indemnity program has restocked his facility with elk. The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Colorado Department of Agriculture are currently attempting to determine if any rules or regulations were violated and if there is any mechanism to once again depopulate the facility.

The State of Michigan has banned supplemental feeding of deer in the four Upper Peninsula counties that border Wisconsin. This ban was put in place on June 8<sup>th</sup> and is effective

immediately.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, Governor John Hoeven of North Dakota directed state officials to step up their efforts to prevent CWD from entering the state's deer and elk herds. The increased activity will include increased surveillance and testing, a public awareness campaign and cooperation with other states fighting CWD. Representatives from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department have been attending the regional CWD meetings held by Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming for the past two years to remain informed on the disease

The state of North Carolina has banned the import of all cervid species into that state.

A new issue reference CWD has come to the forefront in recent days. Several zoos around the country are now experiencing the spring surplus of deer fawns and elk calves. In past years, these animals were traded to other zoos or sold to captive cervid producers. With the new restrictions on movements and CWD fears, 95% of the zoos are unable to dispose of the new additions to their cervid herds. The specter of having to euthanize these animals has several zoos concerned about their public image.

The first week of Wisconsin's eradication hunt is over and hunters and landowners harvested 262 deer within the 361 square mile eradication zone.